

ENGLISH - NEWS - ST LUKE

OUR CHURCH IN OUR COMMUNITIES



Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

April 2015

English Lutheran

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St. Luke Lutheran

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Our Mission:

Called to be shepherds, doing God's work, daily.

To the two churches of the Medina-Streeter Lutheran Parish that are celebrating the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord: Greetings!

Up until this point we have been looking at some of the core themes that make up Lutheran theology. The themes we have looked at however, justification by faith, law and gospel, the means of grace, these are not inherently Lutheran. There are other denominations that hold these teachings to be true as well. The next theme that we will take up however, is a theme that begins to separate Lutheran teaching from that of other Christian denominations. That teaching is what Luther referred to as the Theology of the Cross.

Without any further explanation this teaching doesn't seem all that different from other denominations since almost all Christian denominations teach that Jesus died on the cross. However, the Theology of the Cross is not referring only to the events that took place on that very first Good Friday. The Theology of the Cross instead refers to the way in which we think about God; as Lutherans we think about God from the view of the cross. This is distinguished from other denominations that adhere to a Theology of Glory, that is, as stated in Lutheranism 101 "focused on the power and majesty of God [apart] from God's action in history."¹

If you have ever played the children's game Chutes and Ladders then you will be very familiar with the concept of a theology of glory. In the game Chutes and Ladders each player spins the wheel that tells them how many moves to take to move to the top of the playing board. The winner of the game is the first person to get to the top of the game board. If you land on a specific spot at the bottom of the ladder you can move up more quickly. However, if a player lands on a spot at the top of a chute, they fall down the chute and have to try and climb their way back up starting on their next turn. The theology of glory can be explained in a similar way. A person goes through life trying to use the law of God to gain God's approval; to climb the ladder to heaven if you will. One wrong move (sin), however, and you are sent back down to the bottom having to start all over again to reach the top. If you have ever lived life, which I am sure we all have, you will know right away that this becomes an impossible feat to accomplish. If it were only up to our own actions to reach heaven we would be out of luck, because it would never be able to be attained. As one Lutheran theologian once wrote, "A theology of glory lets human words set the tone for God's

Word, forces his Word into human logic. A theology of glory lets human deeds determine God's deeds, for his demonstration of mercy is determined by the actions of human beings.ⁱⁱ

The theology of the cross, however, takes the actions out of our hands and puts it where it rightly belongs, into God's. The cross would be the last place where we would expect to find God, but sure enough that is exactly where God is found; dying on the cross so that the gates of heaven would be opened to us. As that same theologian wrote, "The cross is the place where God talks our language: it is quite clear what is happening as Christ cries out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' and dies. At the cross God meets his human creatures where they are, in the shadow of death."ⁱⁱⁱ

This is one of the key distinctions in theology that separates Lutheranism from other Christian denominations. In our belief, there is nothing we can say or do that will gain for us our salvation; we cannot make a decision for Christ in order to be saved. Instead Christ already made the decision for us by dying on the cross. The choice we then make comes in response to our salvation, not for our salvation. We do not choose to follow Christ to get to heaven; we choose to follow Christ in order to serve our neighbor, and point them to the cross that has already saved them as well. This is what Luther referred to as the Freedom of a Christian. When we are freed from the burden of trying to save ourselves, we are then freed to serve our neighbors.

The constant critique and shift in human expectations that is found in the theology of the cross leads us to our final core Lutheran teaching which we will discuss next month; the idea that we, as humans, are at the same time a saint and a sinner.

In the name of our Risen Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ,
Pastor Ryan

ⁱLutheranism 101: Culture or confession? Kathryn A. Kleinhans, www.thelutheran.org.

ⁱⁱKolb, Robert. *Luther on the Theology of the Cross*. "The Pastoral Luther: Essays on Martin Luther's Practical Theology," Timothy J. Wengert, ed. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., MI: 2009, pg. 38. ⁱⁱⁱ*Ibid.*, 40.

English Lutheran March Council Meeting Minutes

English Lutheran Church council meeting was held Sunday morning, March 8, 2015 after church services.

Members present were Pastor Ryan, Janet Well, Jacob Hofmann, Jeff Morlock, and Scott Dockter.

Minutes and treasurer's report from last month's meeting were given. Jeff moved and Janet seconded motion to accept both reports, motion carried.

Pastor gave an update on council leadership training coming up at Red Willow Bible Camp. Pastor urged all council members to try and attend the seminar.

Old business:

Fire extinguishers need to be added or updated in the church parsonage.

Rory Hofmann has agreed to be on the endowment fund committee. Pastor Ryan will talk to congregation members to see if any are interested in being on the committee and report back next month.

Jeff has the new rug for the steps in the narthex.

New business:

The council approved to pay any church youth attending Red Willow Bible - \$50.00; Crystal Springs Bible Camp—\$25.00.

Pastor Ryan and council members discussed goals that they would like to see the church meet in the future and the direction they would like to see the church take.

Meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Scott Dockter, Council Secretary

April Worship Times & Events

Sun, April 5

English Sunrise Service
St. Luke
English

Easter

7:00 am
9:00 am
11:00 am

Sun, April 12

St. Luke
English Sunday School
English

Second Sunday of Easter

9:00 am
10:00 am
11:00 am

Tues, April 14

St. Luke

Kids Bible Nite

3:30—5:00 pm

Wed, April 15

English

Confirmation

6:30—8:30 pm

Thurs, April 16

English

Bible Study

7:00 pm

Sun, April 19

St. Luke
English Sunday School
English
English—**MOPS**

Third Sunday of Easter

9:00 am
10:00 am
11:00 am
3:00 pm

Tues, April 21

St. Luke

Bible Study

2:00 pm

Sun, April 26

St. Luke
English Sunday School
English

Fourth Sunday of Easter

9:00 am
10:00 am
11:00 am

Tues, April 28

St. Luke

Kids Bible Nite

3:30—5:00 pm

Wed, April 29

English

Confirmation

6:30—8:30 pm

Sat, May 2

Jamestown Cluster Spring Gathering
Trinity Lutheran Church—Valley City beginning @ 8:30

***Service times change**

Sun, May 3

English
English Sunday School
St. Luke

Fifth Sunday of Easter

9:00 am
10:00 am
11:00 am

English Lutheran Church
PO Box 515
Medina, ND 58467

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